(b) whether it is also a fact that three aircrafts of HAL, fitted with inferior system, have proved to be ineffective; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that HAL is ill equipped in setting up repair and overhauling facilities, if so, what is holding up, and how long it will take to establish these facilities?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The General Contract of December, 2000 was signed with Russians for licence manufacture of Su-30 MK-I aircraft by HAL as per the Standard of Preparation (SOP) for direct purchased aircraft contracted by MoD in 1996. Electronic Warfare System was not included in the General Contract because the system was not identified for the aircraft at that time. The Su-30 MK-I aircraft manufactured by HAL under licence is of the same SOP as that of Stage III aircraft supplied directly by Russia.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) HAL is not ill equipped for setting up repair and overhauling facilities. Su-30 MK-I aircraft were inducted in the Air Force in 2004 and would become due for overhaul from 2010 onwards. The repair and overhaul facilities are planned to be set up by HAL in 2008.

Attack on TN fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy

3697. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a number of fishermen from Tamil Nadu are being attacked and killed by Sri Lankan Navy during the recent years;

(b) whether Government are also aware that attacks by Sri Lankan Navy have increased in the recent years;

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to protect the fishermen of Tamil Nadu;

(d) how many fishermen belonging to south coastal area have been killed in such attacks, till now; and

(e) what are the details of compensation provided for the families of the deceased fishermen?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There have been incidents of firing on Indian fishing boats in Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar area and recently slight increase in such incidents has been noticed.

(c) To protect the Indian fishermen, surveillance and patrolling are regularly done by the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard in the Indian waters of the Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar. Air surveillance is also undertaken. The surveillance mechanisms include coastal patrol, international maritime boundary patrol, air patrol, shallow water patrol and radar surveillance. Further, the Government of India has strongly taken up the issue of firing on Indian fishermen with the Government of Sri Lanka. The need to act with restraint and to treat India's fishermen in a human manner has been repeatedly emphasized to the Government of Sri Lanka.

(d) During the period from 1991 to mid April 2007, 77 fishermen of Tamil Nadu have been killed in such incidents.

(e) Government of Tamil Nadu provides immediate relief to the family of such deceased fishermen according to its norms. In addition, if the deceased belonged to the Fishermen Cooperative Society, his family is also provided financial relief under the Fishermen Accident Group Insurance Scheme operated by the Department of Fisheries through the National Federation of Fishermen Cooperative Ltd.

Funds for development of BrahMos Missile

†3698. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the funds provided by Government for development of BrahMos Missile and its future variant;

(b) whether any decision has been taken for bringing further improvement in its future variant and for increasing its hitting capacity; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The Joint Venture BrahMos was established through Inter-Government Agreement

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.